

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

June 02, 2021

HDRC CASE NO: 2021-255
ADDRESS: 511 VILLITA ST
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NCB 142 BLK LOT 12
ZONING: D, H, RIO-3
CITY COUNCIL DIST.: 1
DISTRICT: La Villita Historic District
LANDMARK: Dashiell House
APPLICANT: Samuel Panchevre/Rocky's on The River
OWNER: SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION
TYPE OF WORK: Signage
APPLICATION RECEIVED: May 07, 2021
60-DAY REVIEW: Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders
CASE MANAGER: Edward Hall

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 511 Villita, at the River Walk level. The proposed sign will read "Rocky's Patio Bar" and is to feature an overall width of forty-eight (48) inches and an overall height of twenty-four (24) inches for a total size of approximately eight (8) square feet. The proposed sign will be located in an existing planter on a small concrete pad.

APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Sec. 35-681. - Signs on the Riverside of Properties Abutting the River or Creek.

This section governs all exterior signs on the riverside of public and private property abutting the San Antonio River and its extensions, San Pedro Creek, and all interior signs hung within ten (10) feet of an exterior fenestration, or those signs intended to be read by exterior patrons on the riverside of a building.

- (a) **Character of Signs.** Signs should respect and respond to the character of the historic Riverwalk area or Creek Improvements. The display of signs and other graphics on the riverside of property abutting the river shall not be permitted except as provided for in this article. Additionally, when reviewing applications for signage the historic preservation officer and the historic and design review commission shall consider the visual impact on nearby historic resources.
- (b) **Sign Definitions.** For signage definitions, refer to subsection 35-612(b) and chapter 28 of the City Code.
- (c) **Standards for Signage.**
 - (1) **Proportion.** For all signage, signage width and height must be in proportion to the facade, respecting the size, scale and mass of the facade, building height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. The building facade shall be considered as part of an overall sign program but the sign shall be subordinate to the overall building composition. Additionally, signs shall respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed.
 - (2) **Size.** The maximum allowable size for any sign on the riverside of property abutting the publicly owned Riverwalk and visible from the Riverwalk shall be eight (8) square feet. If a building surface is used for signage, the letters or design shall not exceed a surface area of eight (8) square feet. In RIO-7, the maximum allowable size of any sign on the creek-side of property abutting the publicly owned Paseo shall be twelve (12) square feet. However, additional square footage may be approved, except in RIO-3, provided that the additional signage is in conformity, and does not interfere with, the pedestrian experience on the Riverwalk. The additional square footage shall be based upon the size and design of the site, setback from the river and shall be appropriate for the area in which it is being placed.
 - (3) **Roof Top/Parapet Signs.** No signs shall be displayed from the parapet or roof of any building unless designated by the historic preservation officer as a contributing structure.

- (4) Signs for Riverwalk Business Only. No sign, visual display, or graphic shall be placed in the Riverwalk area unless it advertises a bona fide business conducted in, or on premises adjacent to the Riverwalk. Only buildings that have an entrance directly onto the Riverwalk may display a sign or graphic.
- (5) Number of Signs. Only one (1) identification sign shall be allowed for each store, shop, restaurant, nightclub, or place of business in the Riverwalk area and fronting on the Riverwalk. In addition to a sign, establishments serving food or beverages may erect a menu board, which shall be used only for displaying menus.
- (6) Illumination. Internally illuminated signs are prohibited in RIOs 1 through 6. The light source for exterior illumination shall be steady light concealed by a hood or other acceptable method of indirect lighting. Flashing lights, rope lighting and exposed neon lights are prohibited. In RIO-7, halo-lit letters are permitted as a source of internal illumination.
- (7) Materials. Signs may be constructed of wood, metal, glass. Lettering may be painted, stamped, etched, carved, applied metal or wood. Vinyl lettering may be permitted for interior signs provided it respects and responds to the character of the historic Riverwalk area.
- (8) Pedestrian Menu Boards.
 - (A) Pedestrian menu boards shall not exceed two (2) square feet.
 - (B) Permanently displayed menus may be properly installed inside the business' window or in an approved wall-mounted or freestanding display case adjacent to the business entrance.
 - (C) The name of the establishment may not be displayed on the menu board if the business has other signage installed on the premises. It is permissible for the name of the restaurant to be placed on the actual menu. The established logo of a business is considered a sign.
 - (D) All items listed on a menu board must be placed within the border of the menu board or within the display case.
 - (E) There may be no more than one (1) pedestrian menu board per establishment unless there are two primary entrances to a building on different facades, in which case a pedestrian menu board for each entrance may be approved.
- (9) Signage on Umbrellas or Street Furniture. Advertising brand name products may not be placed on umbrellas, tables, chairs, table decorations or other street furniture that are located on outdoor patio areas. Additionally, logos or wording of any kind may not be placed on umbrellas, tables, chairs, table decorations or other street furniture that are located on outdoor patio areas.
- (10) Directory Signage. Buildings with several businesses may be permitted to install directory signage in lieu of individual signs. Directory signage may not exceed eight (8) square feet.
- (11) Revolving Signs, Etc. Revolving signs, flashing lights, search lights and attention-getting devices, including, but not limited to, banners, festoons, paper and vinyl rope-like-banners are not permitted. Digital and/or LED lighted signs, with or without rotating, flashing lettering, full motion video, icons or images are also not permitted.
- (12) Projecting Arm Signs. Signs hung from poles are allowed on the riverside of properties abutting the publicly owned river right-of-way as long as the pole height does not exceed seven (7) feet, the pole diameter does not exceed three (3) inches, and does not encroach upon the right-of-way.
- (13) Temporary Signage. No more than one (1) temporary sign is allowed at any given time. Temporary signs facing the river shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in RIO-3 and twenty-four (24) square feet in all other RIO districts. Temporary signage for special events shall be limited to installation forty-eight (48) hours before the event and must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of completion of the event for a total of no more than thirty (30) days.
- (14) Prohibited Signs. No billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, posters, sandwich boards or advertising benches shall be allowed on the riverside of buildings abutting the river. Any sign, visual display, or graphic which is located in the Riverwalk area and which is visible from the publicly owned portion of the San Antonio River channel or adjacent walkways must meet the requirements for signs, visual displays, and graphics as set out in this division. No sign, visual display or graphic shall be allowed in the Riverwalk area

unless it is advertising or giving information concerning a business or activity that is located on the same lot as the sign, visual display or graphic.

- (d) Installation. Signs, posters, decals or advertisements may not be tacked, nailed, pasted, or taped to any portion of a building, object, site or structure in a manner that will cause irreversible damage or loss, or is considered inappropriate under any applicable guidelines utilized by the office of historic preservation.
- (e) Hardship Cases.
 - (1) Whenever the location, topography or configuration of any lot is such as will cause a hardship by the limitations placed on the signs permitted by this article due to sight distances, existing vegetation, location of buildings on adjacent lots, and/or the topography of the parcel, approval may be granted to either allow additional signage, or to increase the amount of building mounted sign area by not more than twenty-five (25) percent.
 - (2) No additional signage shall be approved unless it is found that approval of the proposed application will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property and that the character of the area will not be changed by the granting of additional signage.
 - (3) Any additional signage approval shall be limited to the applicant only, and shall not apply to any future tenant or business.
- (f) Nonconforming Status. Any legally erected sign which, by reason of revisions to this chapter, no longer complies with its provisions, shall be awarded nonconforming status upon review of all necessary city departments.
- (g) Violations in River Improvement Overlay Districts and on the Riverwalk. In those instances where a sign is erected or maintained in violation of the aforementioned restrictions, the historic preservation officer, the department of development services or park police shall notify the sign's owner, agent, operator, or lessee. If the owner, agent, operator, or lessee of the sign fails to remove the sign within three (3) days after notification, the department of development services, park police or historic preservation officer may remove the sign within three (3) days after notification, and/or the department of development services, the historic preservation officer or park police may file an action in municipal court as outlined in section 28-15. In addition, nothing herein shall prevent the city attorney from seeking civil remedies.
 - (1) Dilapidated Signs. All signs shall be maintained in good working condition so as to present a neat and orderly appearance. The historic preservation officer, through the office of historic preservation, code compliance department, department of planning and development services or the park police may give written notice to remove or repair any sign which shows gross neglect or which becomes dilapidated. Failure to comply shall be considered a violation of this chapter, and the sign shall be removed at the owner's expense.
 - (2) Abandoned Signs. A sign, including its supporting structure or brackets, shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the premises upon which the sign is located when the business which it advertises is no longer on the premises and such sign has been determined to be abandoned under the provisions of chapter 28. Such sign, if not removed within thirty (30) days from the determination of abandonment by such business shall be considered to be in violation of this chapter, and shall be removed at the owner's expense. This does not include signs that are currently approved as contributing structures.

FINDINGS:

- a. The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage at 511 Villita, at the River Walk level. The proposed sign will read "Rocky's Patio Bar" and is to feature an overall width of forty-eight (48) inches and an overall height of twenty-four (24) inches for a total size of approximately eight (8) square feet. The proposed sign will be located in an existing planter on a small concrete pad.
- b. SIGNAGE – The UDC Section 35-681 notes that signage on the river side of properties abutting the San Antonio River shall not exceed eight (8) square feet, shall be indirectly illuminated, shall be constructed of wood, metal or glass, and are only allowed for business with a door leading directly onto the River Walk. Staff finds the proposed signage to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC Section 35-681.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval as submitted based on findings a and b. The applicant is responsible for coordinating the placement of this sign with Center City Development and Operations Department (CCDO).